

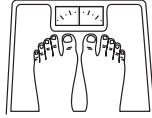


A Healthy Immune System

Your body's natural immune system helps protect you from getting sick. To have a strong, healthy immune system, your body needs nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, proteins and fats. These nutrients are all found in food.

Tips for a Healthy Immune System

1. Try to maintain body weight. Losing a lot of weight makes the immune system weak because there are not enough nutrients for the body to use. This can lead to undernutrition.



2. Eat a wide variety of foods. Choose foods that make your body strong. Stay away from foods that do nothing for your body, such as pastries, candy, soft drinks and potato chips.

3. Use caution when taking vitamin and mineral supplements. Nutrients work together to make the immune system stronger. Taking a daily multivitamin and mineral supplement may help some people. However, before taking supplements in large amounts (megadosing), talk to your doctor or clinic.



4. Choose foods that are low in fat. Too much fat may make your immune system weak.



5. Limit caffeine and alcoholic beverages that rob the body of important nutrients.

6. Do not use tobacco products. Substances in tobacco products are toxic, and can cause your body to need more of certain nutrients.

Undernutrition

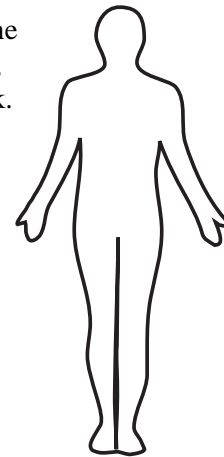
When your body does not get the variety and amounts of nutrients it needs (undernutrition), the immune system can become weak.

Weakened immunity

When the immune system is weak, you may get sick.

Poor use of nutrients

When the body does not use nutrients well, the immune system gets weaker, disease continues and the unhealthy cycle continues.



Disease

When you get sick, the body cannot use nutrients properly.

Glossary

Immune system - the system that helps keep the body healthy by fighting germs.

Nutrients - substances in food used by the body to grow, repair or maintain health.

Supplements - extra nutrients in the diet usually supplied by pills, powder or liquid in addition to the nutrients received from food.

Undernutrition - a condition that results when you don't eat the foods you need to stay healthy.



For information about testing, call:

County of San Diego - Health and Human Services Agency - (619) 515-6600

For more information about HIV/AIDS, call:

Southern California AIDS Hotline
English: 1-800-922-AIDS; Spanish: 1-800-400-SIDA
National AIDS Hotline - 1-800-342-AIDS

